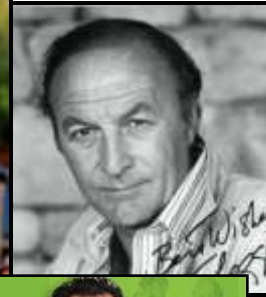


ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

Who is Robert?



A wise man once said...



“There are attorneys who spend their entire careers studying parliamentary law and even they don’t know all the answers.”

Neither do we!



Henry Martyn Robert was an engineering officer in the regular Army. Without warning he was asked to preside over a church meeting and realized that he did not know how. He tried anyway and his embarrassment was supreme. This event, which may seem familiar to many readers, left him determined never to attend another meeting until he knew something of parliamentary law.

Ultimately, he discovered and studied the few books then available on the subject. From time to time, due to his military duties, he was transferred to various parts of the United States where he found virtual parliamentary anarchy since each member from a different part of the country had differing ideas of correct procedure. To bring order out of chaos he decided to write *Robert's Rules of Order* as it came to be called.

The tenth current edition has been brought about through a process of keeping the book up to date with the growth of parliamentary procedure. All editions of the work issued after the death of the original author have been prepared by persons who either knew and worked with the original author or are connected to such persons in a direct continuity of professional association.



Survival Tips on Robert's Rules of Order

We must learn to run a meeting without victimizing the audience; but more importantly, without being victimized by individuals who are armed with parliamentary procedure and a personal agenda.

Survival Tips on Robert's Rules of Order



Code of Laws or Bylaws - The Best Advice

Parliamentary Procedure is useless, unless you are familiar with your Code of Laws or Bylaws. The best advice anyone can give you is to become familiar with the Code of Laws or Bylaws of your City.

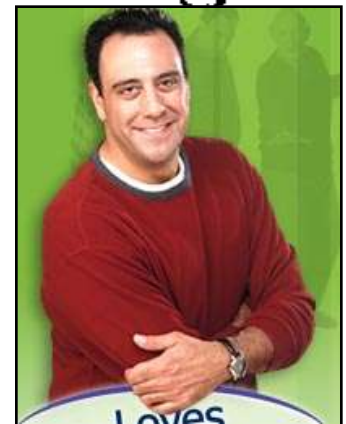
Your Code of Laws or Bylaws should state which one Parliamentary Authority will rule your meetings.

**Survival Tips on
Robert's Rules of Order**

Unfinished Business, Yes; Old Business, Never!

"Old Business" means that you are reconsidering matters already disposed of. "Unfinished Business" means that you are continuing with matters which are currently not completed. (RONR(10th ed.),p.346)

Before the current agenda is put together, the previous agenda should be reviewed to identify matters which were not disposed of from the previous meeting.



**Survival Tips on
Robert's Rules of Order**

Totally Wrong Phrases!



I. SO MOVED!

II. I MOVE TO TABLE!

III. CALL FOR THE QUESTION!



Survival Tips on Robert's Rules of Order



The term 'Meeting' does have its own special meanings:

1. **Regular (or Stated) Meeting** - Refers to the periodic business meeting held weekly, monthly, or quarterly, as prescribed by the Code of Laws or Bylaws. Each regular meeting normally completes a separate session.

If an issue was never reached on the agenda of one session, the issue could be carried forward.

If an issue was reached in the agenda but not finally disposed of, it could be reached by the next session if the issue had been postponed (or made a special order), laid on the table, moved for Reconsideration at the correct time, or referred to a committee.

2. **Special (or Called) Meeting** - Is held at a time different from a regular meeting, and convened only to consider one or more items of business specified in the call of the meeting.

3. **Executive Session** - any meeting in which the proceedings are confidential and meets requirements constitutes an executive session. Contract negotiations, agreements, receipt of legal advice and personnel matters meet the requirements of items that qualify for executive session.

Majority: The basic requirement for adoption of a motion by any group with a quorum is a **Majority Vote**, *except for certain motions*. Majority is 'more than half' of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote.

2/3 Vote: Robert specifies which motion will require at least a **2/3 vote** for adoption. Notice that it is not called a 2/3 majority. Examples are:

1. Suspends or modifies a rule of order already adopted;
2. Prevents the introduction of a question to consideration;
3. Closes, limits, or extends the limits of debate;



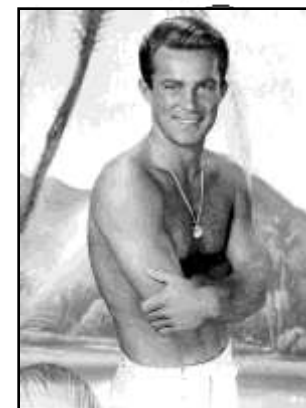
To calculate a 2/3 vote, divide the number of votes by 3 and multiply by 2 (rounding up on fractions).

Examples:

5 members of Council divided by 3 = 1.66 x 2 = 3.33 or 4 votes

7 members of Council divided by 3 = 2.33 x 2 = 4.66 or 5 votes

9 members of Council divided by 3 = 3 x 2 = 6 votes



Survival Tips on Robert's Rules of Order

2/3 Vote vs. Majority Vote

The basic requirement for approval of an action is a majority vote. However, the following situations require a 2/3 vote for approval. Notice that all of these motions rob the individual of his rights. As a compromise between the rights of the individual and the rights of the assembly, a 2/3 vote is necessary to:

1. **Modify an Adopted Rule of Order or Agenda**
2. **Prevent the Introduction of a Question for Consideration**
3. **Modify the Extend of Debate**
4. **Repeal an Assignment**
5. **Make a Motion a Special Order**

2/3 vs
Majority



Survival Tips on Robert's Rules of Order



Six Steps to Every Motion!

Every motion requires 6 steps (with some exceptions). The shoulds and shouldn'ts are as follows: (RONR(10th ed.),p.31-54)

STEP 1. A member is recognized, and makes a motion

Common Mistake: Members do not wait to be recognized, and typically start to discuss their motion before completing STEP 2, STEP 3, and STEP 4 below!

STEP 2. Another member seconds the motion

Common Mistake: The person seconding the motion dives into the merits of the motion.

STEP 3. The presiding officer restates the motion

Common Mistake: Motion is restated differently from the wording of the maker! Beware because the motion that is adopted is the one stated by the presiding officer, **not** the one stated by the maker of the original motion.

STEP 4. The members debate the motion

Common Mistake: Debate gets out of control in temper, in duration, in relevance! Members talk at each other across the room rather than through the presiding officer.

STEP 5. Presiding officer asks for the affirmative votes & then the negative votes

Common Mistake: The presiding officer states 'All in favor' and fails to tell the members what to do as a matter of voting (for example, 'say aye', 'stand up', 'raise your hand', etc.); or the negative vote is never requested or counted!

STEP 6. The presiding officer announces the result of the voting and introduces the next item of business

Common Mistake: Presiding officer fails to pronounce the result of the voting! Commonly, dead silence follows because the presiding officer is lost.





Survival Tips on Robert's Rules of Order

Some General Exceptions

For the sake of expediency, the chair can always say "***If there is no objection ...***", and then declares what action the chair is going to take in the name of the assembly! If no one objects, the 6 steps are skipped and the motion has been adopted in 5 words. If someone objects, the chair follows the 6 steps, cheerfully.

On the other hand, not all motions require the 6 steps. It is important to know which motions do and which motions do not require the 6 steps, especially when the chair cannot get away with "If there is no objection ...".



Examples of situations which clearly beg for the Unanimous Consent approach are:

1. To correct or approve the minutes.
2. To withdraw an own motion before the vote is taken.
3. To suspend a rule on a matter clearly not controversial (and as long as no Code of Laws or Bylaws are violated).
4. To allow a speaker a few more minutes than the prescribed time.
5. To allow a guest speaker to speak in an order contrary to the approved agenda.
6. To divide a complex motion into logical parts for discussion, amendments, and voting purposes.
7. To close the voting process after inquiring if there are any more votes.

Survival Tips on Robert's Rules of Order

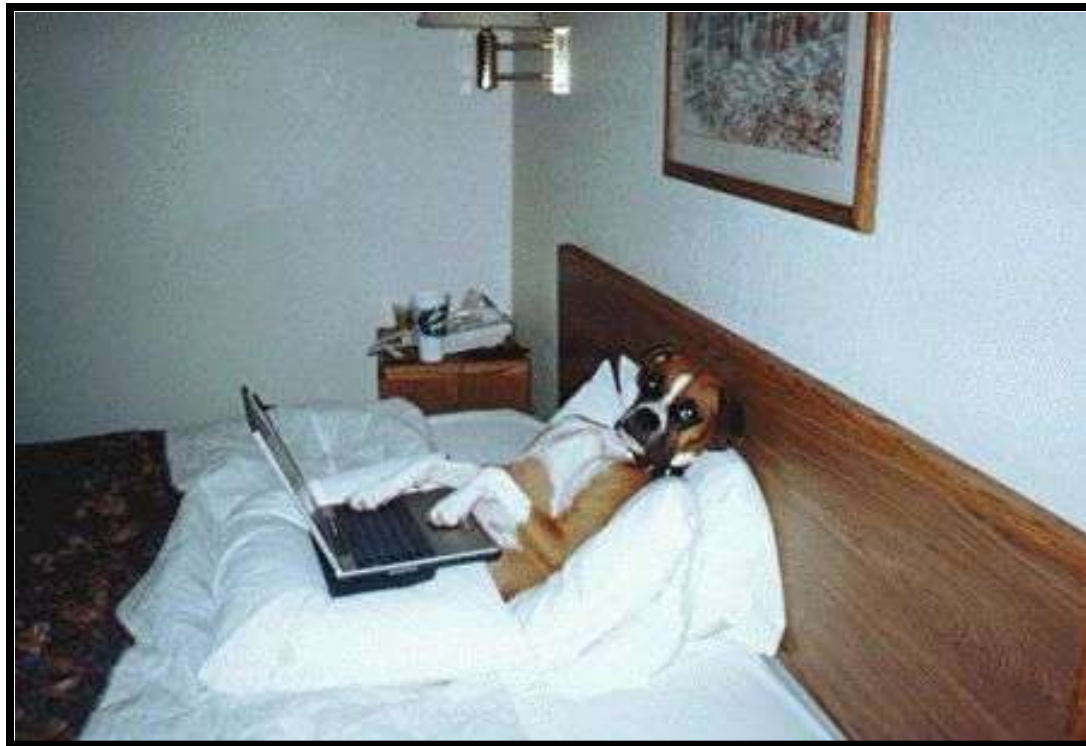


Four Motions that are always Out of Order

A Main Motion reflects the will of the members of the organization! However, the following 4 motions are never in order, even if adopted by a unanimous vote:

1. Motions which **conflict with laws**
2. Motions which present something **already rejected** during the same session, or conflict with a motion already adopted
3. Motions which conflict with or present substantially the **same question** as one which has been temporarily disposed of
4. Motions which propose actions **beyond the scope** of the Code of Laws or bylaws.

Oh, Oh...A Test!

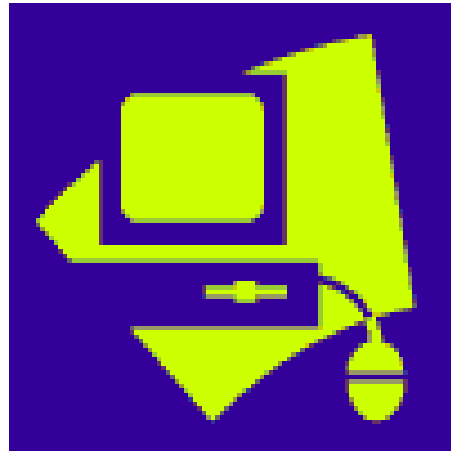


Can I be excused? I'm not feeling well!

EXCELLENT! Thanks for taking the quiz.



1. The correct answer: **A**
Parliamentary Inquiry is used to obtain information about meeting procedure.
2. The correct answer: **B**
Previous Question means if adopted by a two-thirds vote, debate ends and a vote is immediately taken.
3. The correct answer: **B**
Other than the Articles of Incorporation, the highest body of rules in an organization are bylaws.
4. The correct answer: **C**
A quorum is the minimum number of members who must be present for business to be transacted.
5. The correct answer: **A**
A main motion brings business before the assembly.
6. The correct answer: **C**
If a member makes a motion that is not in order the chair may suggest an alternate motion.
7. The correct answer: **C**
If the bylaws require an election to be by ballot, this provision cannot be suspended, even by a unanimous vote.
8. The correct answer: **A**
Division of the question means to separate a motion into two or more parts, each capable of standing as separate motions.
9. The correct answer: **B**
The motion to Lay on the Table can be used to temporarily set aside a motion because something of immediate urgency has arisen.
10. The correct answer: **B**
A meeting at which the proceedings are secret is called an executive session.



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- 1. Don't let the rules get you down.**
- 2. Disagree without being disagreeable.**
- 3. The Chairman runs the meeting.**
- 4. Close Debate by Unanimous Consent.**
- 5. Use a counted vote to approve a project.**

**Survival Tips on
Robert's Rules of Order**

- 6. Voting is important.**
- 7. Use a qualified Parliamentarian.**
- 8. Use the right parliamentary book for your organization.**
- 9. Every meeting is a partnership between the leader and the participants.**
- 10. Your meeting should enforce the will of the majority while protecting the rights of all members.**

By Stran L. Trout, PRP